

YELLOWSTONE RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONSERVATION DISTRICT MEMBERS: Carbon, Custer, Dawson, Park, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Yellowstone, McKenzie County North Dakota

Meeting Minutes -- June 16, 2005

V.A. Auditorium - Miles City

Members Present: Paul Gilbert, Sweet Grass CD; Gay Easton, Yellowstone CD; Bob Hector, Yellowstone CD; Kenny Nemitz, Dawson CD; Dave Davenport, Rosebud CD; Phil Fox, Treasure CD; Luther Waterland, MACD; Walter Rolf, Custer CD; and Orvin Finsaas, McKenzie ND, CD.

Others Present: Warren Kellogg, NRCS; Stan Danielsen, YRCDC Coordinator; Kelly Gilbertson, YRCDC Project Assistant; Greg Johnson, ACOE; Steve Story, RAC; Art Gehmert, RAC; John Franklin, RAC; Richard Cayko, RAC; Liz Ching, Baucas's office; Dustin Frost, Rehberg's office; Laurie Kelly, Rosebud CD Administrator; Megan Sweedland, RCD intern and Carol Watts, Custer CD Administrator.

Chairman Paul Gilbert called the meeting to order at 10:10 am on Thursday, June 16, 2005. Introductions were made.

TAC update: See attachment for Warren's notes. Warren started the meeting with a TAC update. He thanked Gay Easton and Bob Hector, YRCDC members, for attending the TAC meeting that was held on June 15th in Billings.

Greg Johnson spoke to the Council stating that the Senate had earmarked a million dollars in the President's budget for the YRCDC study which is a good sign. Greg said he would be in Montana often this summer because of other Corp projects that he is involved with.

Warren said that the TAC worked with the assumption that the COE would receive \$800,000.00 and presented a recommendation to the Council on how that funding might be allocated. The specific break-down is in the attached TAC notes.

Warren requested adding funding to the existing contract with DTM (Bozeman GIS consultant) to produce maps for the specific study reaches. There would be two maps generated for each reach: one with just the color infrared photography and another with land ownership with the photography. Generating the maps will cost \$2200.00 and printing 140 maps at \$15.00 each will cost \$2100.00. The YRCDC would also have these electronically and would be able to generate hardcopy maps as needed. The funding will come from the FY05 to FY06 carryover in the pass-thru grant that needs to be spent before the end of FY06. In addition, Warren also requested funding for developing an internet application for the 310/physical features database estimated to cost approximately \$18,500.00. Warren received approval from the Council on all of these requests by consensus vote.

Warren reported that the TAC reviewed an existing publication "Invasive Plants of Range and Wildlands and Their Environmental, Economic, and Societal Impacts" published in 2005. This study does a good job completing the literature review for the invasive plants scope of work, with the exception that Russian Olive trees were not included. The TAC is recommending that the authors be contacted to see if they would be willing to do an addendum to their publication to include Russian Olive. The Council granted permission to buy 20 copies of the study for their members. This funding will come from the pass-through grant.

Two new additional study reaches (C19 and D1) were added to the cumulative effects work, primarily to complement the geomorphic scope of work. These reaches are in the Kinsey area and at the mouth of the Powder River. The Council approved adding these reaches by consensus vote.

Coordinator's Report: The first item presented was the new standing rules. These were modified at the last meeting with one sentence taken out concerning reimbursement for meetings. A handout is available. The next item was the reimbursement policy. New rate changes were corrected and the policy on paying RAC and TAC was updated to match changes that were recorded in the minutes. It now reflects what we are actually doing. The reimbursement policy was approved by consensus vote.

Dale Vermilion was not at the meeting so the option of moving him to the at large conservation, recreation and academic position on the RAC was tabled until another meeting.

Grant extensions included the existing RDGP grant and the 319 grant. There is money left in the RDGP because the contract with Merrick came in under the bid. The extra money will be used to acquire historical aerial photos. The use for any remaining money after that has not been determined. The 319 grant was extended for one year. That money will be used for the 310 data base. The 310 grant will also fund the data base. A request to extend the EPA-RGI grant has been done and we are waiting for approval. This grant is used for RAC reimbursement.

The Watershed Planning and Assistance grant from DNRC in the amount of \$10,000.00 will be used for designing a logo, replacing the fact sheet and purchase of a display unit that can be taken to fairs, conventions, etc. The display unit is done but is waiting for the header. The first draft of the logo was shown to the Council. There could still be changes made. The display will be finished by the end of July and will be available for conservation districts to display at their local fairs. A question was asked on whether there would be money for set-up fees. Stan said there would be some money left for those expenses as needed.

The last item on the Coordinator's report was the budget concerning the spend down on the pass through grant. Stan explained that we had been getting \$60,000.00 a year for the last few years from the DNRC pass through funds. This pays the operating expenses for the YRCDC Council. We have tried to be very frugal with this money so we could continue to maximize the carryover. Last spring we were told that we needed to spend the money or we would lose it. We have permission to carryover some money this year, but there can be no money left over in June of 2006. There is approximately \$7,200.00 that will need to be spent. Stan is showing this money in the budget as supplies and misc. expenses. This budget needs to be approved before we will get any more funding. The draft which Stan presented to the Council is for information only. The in-kind still needs to be added. The Council gave Stan tentative approval on the budget and told him to proceed.

Business meeting: Treasurer's report was given by Carol Watts. The financial report shows all the activity in the account since the last meeting. The grant statement shows the balances in the grant funds. The reports were accepted by consensus vote. There was one minor correction to the minutes and they were approved by consensus vote also.

Paul Gilbert stated that a public comment section needed to be added to the agenda in the future.

The Yellowstone CD will have a meeting on July 27, 2005 with Allan Steinle of the COE in attendance to speak to them about the new stream mitigation proposal. This proposal is of concern to conservation districts as it affects the way 310 applications will be handled. Anyone who wants to come to the meeting is welcome. There is still an opportunity to make recommendations to the proposal. Phil Fox strongly advised the Council not to make any comments.

Luther Waterland, representing the MACD commented that the Northern Plains Region will be situated to have some real input during the drafting of the new farm bill. Luther is chairman of the Ag Lands committee, Mike Wendland is on the farm bill task force and there is another representative from this region on the legislative committee. There are two officers in NACD from the Northern Plains Region.

It is not known when the next meeting will be. The next TAC meeting will likely be September 13-14th in Billings. There could be a tele-conference call before then.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Watts, CCCD Administrator